

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. USSR: CPSU PLENUM

A. SHELEPIN OUSTER

EMBASSY MOSCOW OFFERS THE FOLLOWING INITIAL COMMENT ON THE
REMOVAL OF ALEXANDER SHELEPIN FROM THE CPSU POLITBURO AT A
SNAP PLENUM APRIL 16:

--THE POLITICAL BALANCE WITHIN THE POLITBURO HAS CLEAR-
LY SHIFTED IN BREZHNEV'S FAVOR.

--BREZHNEV'S STRENGTHENED LEADERSHIP POSITION INDICATES
A CORRESPONDING STRENGTHENING OF HIS DETENTE POLICY,
THOUGH SHELEPIN HIMSELF HAS BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
BEEN A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THAT POLICY.

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THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE OPENING DATE FOR THE 25TH PARTY CON-
GRESS (FEBRUARY 24, 1976) SHOULD TRIGGER A CYCLE OF PARTY
MEETINGS LEADING TO PERSONNEL SHIFTS AT ALL LEVELS. THE
FINAL RESULTS OF THESE SHIFTS WILL DETERMINE THE RELATIVE

POLITICAL STRENGTH OF SOVIET LEADERS FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

B. FOREIGN POLICY RESOLUTION

IN RELATION TO THE LAST SUCH DOCUMENT, THE PLENUM'S FOREIGN POLICY RESOLUTION STRIKES THE EMBASSY AS MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT SOVIET AND SOCIALIST ACHIEVEMENTS, SOMEWHAT MORE GUARDED ON COMMITMENT TO DETENTE, AND MORE PUGNACIOUS ON "IMPERIALIST" ACTIVITIES. (CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 5279, 4/16 AND (CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 5297, 4/16.

2. SOVIETS CONVINCED OF MAO-CHOU DISPUTE

IN AN APRIL 14 DISCUSSION, IGOR ROGACHEV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA'S FIRST FAR EAST DIVISION, SAID THAT EVIDENCE OF MAO-CHOU DIFFERENCES WAS "RELIABLE" AND THAT THE MAOISTS ARE "DIGGING A HOLE" UNDER CHOU. ROGACHEV ALSO SAID:

--CHINESE CADRES ARE PRIVATELY ADMITTING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT MAO IS ILL, POSSIBLY SERIOUSLY.

--WHILE CHOU HAS USED THE PRETEXT OF ILLNESS TO STAY OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE IN RECENT MONTHS, VISITORS CONFIRM THAT HE IS HEALTHY AND "FRESH AS A CUCUMBER." (CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 5296, 4/16.

3. ETHIOPIA

A. EPMG HARDENS POSITION IN ERITREA

AMCONSUL ASMARA BELIEVES THAT THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS WILL MAKE ANY ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN ERITREANS AND THE EPMG MORE DIFFICULT:

--SECURITY TROOPS HAVE INTENSIFIED THEIR EFFORTS TO ROOT OUT THE ELF/PLF IN A CAMPAIGN WHICH INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL

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SYSTEMATIC BRUTALITY TOWARD ASMARA'S RESIDENTS.

--TOP AND MIDDLE LEVEL ERITREAN ADMINISTRATORS CRITICAL OF THE EPMG'S ERITREAN POLICY HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO OTHER AREAS.

B. COMPLAINTS ABOUT US POLICY

IN A CANDID TALK WITH AMBASSADOR HUMMEL APRIL 15, PMAC CHAIRMAN TEFERI BANTE ENUMERATED NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS REGARDING US POLICY TOWARDS THE ADDIS GOVERNMENT.

--THE US FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE AND TIMELY ARMS

AID IN RESPONSE TO AN URGENT EMERGENCY HAS BEEN A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT AND RAISED SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE TRUE INTENTIONS OF THE US GOVERNMENT.

--LAST YEAR'S WITHDRAWAL OF THE TENNECO OIL EXPLORATION TEAM AND THE DEPARTURE OF SOME AID-SPONSORED PROFESSORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY, BOTH "OSTENSIBLY FOR SECURITY REASONS," ARE AMONG OTHER INDICATIONS OF UNFRIENDLY US ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES.

AS FOR THE PRESENT, TEFERI BANTE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING NEW WEAPONS IN AMPLE TIME TO PERMIT ADEQUATE TRAINING BEFORE THE EXPECTED OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES WITH SOMALIA, POSSIBLY IN JUNE OR JULY.

HUMMEL, WHO REFUTED THE CHARGES, NOTES THAT WHILE THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST AMMO AIRLIFT SHOULD HELP CLEAR THE ATMOSPHERE, THE UNAVAILABILITY OF A NUMBER OF ITEMS THE GOE WANTS IN HAND BY JUNE TO COUNTER THE "SOMALI THREAT" WILL REMAIN A SORE POINT. NONETHELESS, AT NO TIME DID THE CHAIRMAN THREATEN TO TURN ELSEWHERE FOR MILITARY SUPPORT. (CONFIDENTIAL) ASMARA 0413, 4/16 AND (CONFIDENTIAL) ADDIS ABABA 4510 (LIMDIS), 4/16. KISSINGER

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